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BACKTRACKING FROM VICTORY

By William Henry Chamberlin

There is a legendary Irishman who, on seeing a mutilated statue supposed to represent Victory, exclaimed: "If that's Victory, show me Defeat." The Irishman might have been commenting on the international position of the U.S. six years after complete victory over the Axis powers.

All the things that crusading interventionists predicted would happen to us if we did not pitch in and "stop Hitler" have happened to us in spite of Hitler's annihilation. We find ourselves forced to launch a prodigious program of military preparedness, with spending on a scale that would have seemed astronomical, even impossible, in the thirties. Our economy becomes more and more dependent on the State and is forced increasingly into totalitarian molds. New casualty lists pour in on us while the memory of the casualty lists of the late war is still green.

Germany, supposedly the source of all evil in Europe, has been crushed. But we are making unprecedented peacetime overseas military commitments in Europe. Japan, so long represented by our ardent crusaders as the demon of the Orient, has been knocked out. But, regardless of the outcome of the Korean armistice negotiations, America's whole Far Eastern position has been gravely undermined by the emergence of a fanatically hostile Communist China.

The moral benefits that were supposed to accrue from our late crusade are conspicuous by their absence. The peoples of Eastern Europe are certainly neither freer nor happier because Nazi domination has been replaced by Soviet domination. The systematic massacres of real or suspected political opponents carried out by Chinese and North Korean Communists match the worst cruelties which could be charged against the Japanese. Whether viewed as a means of insuring America's own security or as an instrument for promoting a world of peace, freedom and justice, the Second World War must be written down as a complete failure.

And the irony of this failure is enhanced because America's security, perhaps her national survival, now depend on undoing as fast as possible most of what Mr. Roosevelt subscribed to at Teheran and Yalta and Harry S. Truman ratified at Potsdam. Can we escape from victory?

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That is the most vital question that confronts us in international relations today.

II

This backtracking from victory is one of the strongest impressions I brought back from a recent trip in Western Europe. All the more intelligent and farsighted men in the High Commissioner's office in Germany are now keenly bent on winning Germany for the West. They recognize the necessity of a substantial German contribution to West European defense. They know that the price of that contribution must be full German equality; military, political, economic, within the framework of a more closely united non-Communist Europe.

But how much simpler it would have been to achieve this objective if there had never been a Morgenthau Plan, if the countless blunders of the first years of occupation had been avoided. It would have been infinitely easier to rally effective German support now if there had been no "victors' justice", no pharisaical war-crime trials without German and neutral participation, no excesses of denazification and dismantling.

Every American officer with whom I talked privately in Europe recognized that the prospects of successful defense against Soviet attack would be greatly improved by the creation of a West German military force. This could have been done far more effectively and smoothly if a small German army had been maintained after the end of the war and if there had not been the policy of lumping all German army officers with the more brutal and fanatical Nazis.

Spain is a most obvious example of backtracking from the mistaken policy of 1945 and 1946, when the United States, swallowing the Soviet camel, strained at the Franco gnat. There was never the slightest basis in ethics or expediency for singling out Spain for discrimination while maintaining full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Backtracking in this case can only be applauded, in view of the strategic importance of the Iberian peninsula. But it is better not to make a mistake in the first place than to make it and then belatedly correct it.

One of the many evil features of the Yalta agreement was the obligation assumed by the United States and Great Britain to hand back to the Soviet authorities Soviet citizens who might be found in the western occupation zones. This stupid and inhuman decision led to appalling tragedies, including many suicides. It has now been reversed and the United States is showing more disposition to support anti-Communist organizations among the Soviet refugees. But it would be difficult to exaggerate the demoralizing effect on these refugees of the original

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Yalta decision. Some of the most promising and popular anti-Communist Russians, such as General Andrei Vlasov, were handed back to execution.

So all along the line, in Germany, in Spain, in the treatment of Italy, in the attitude toward anti-Soviet Russians, retreat from victory is the order of the day in Europe. That the new policy is more correct and realistic is scarcely open to question.

III

Retreat from the consequences of victory has become equally necessary in the Far East. Our war against Japan made political sense only on the assumption that a reasonably strong and friendly China would emerge after the end of the conflict. The bankruptcy of the Roosevelt-Hull Far Eastern policy was finally confirmed when the Chinese Communist, Wu Hsiu-chuan, got up in the forum of the United Nations, almost on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, and hurled at the United States a speech more vituperative than the Japanese declaration of war in 1941.

Now there is a rather striking parallel between the situations in Europe and in Asia. We counted on a friendly Poland and Czechoslovakia in Europe, as we counted on a friendly China in Asia. All these great expectations have gone with the wind. This leaves us in the somewhat ironical position of having to reckon with Germany as an indispensable pivot in any effective European defense scheme, with Japan as a key element in an oriental balance of power.

Thanks partly to the administrative genius of General MacArthur, partly to the fact that the occupation of Japan from the beginning was, for all practical purposes, a strictly American enterprise, there are not so many blunders to be made good in Japan as in Germany. Still there are some unwise measures: the writing for Japan of a utopian pacifistic constitution; the elimination of many of the competent Japanese from public office and from the direction of industry; and certain economic changes which have been imposed with little regard for special Japanese conditions, which should be revised as soon as possible. The restoration of sovereignty to Japan, following the San Franciso peace treaty, will presumably mean the end of these measures and is consequently to be welcomed.

That Japan should be our strongest potential friend in the Orient, and Red China our most embittered enemy (as testified by the thousands of Americans who have been killed by the Chinese Communists), turns our victory in the war against Japan to dust and ashes. Indeed the United States would be much more secure today if Japan were militarily capable of functioning as an effective counterweight to the Moscow-Peiping Axis.

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Another issue on which a retreat from victory is urgently necessary is the disposition of Formosa. Without even suggesting a plebiscite or any form of consultation of the will of the people, as required under the Atlantic Charter, Roosevelt and Churchill at Cairo in November, 1943, arbitrarily ruled that Formosa should be handed over to China. This is one of the best talking points of Soviet and Chinese Communists today. The sooner the decisions of Cairo, as of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, can be consigned to oblivion and repudiation, the better it will be for America's national interests.

IV

What is profoundly disturbing is that so many of the men who are closely associated with the wrong decisions that turned military victory into tragic political defeat are still in positions of high authority. Secretary Acheson was, to put it mildly, no Paul Revere sounding an alarm against the future designs of the Kremlin during the war years. As late as November, 1945, he shared a platform with the notorious "Red Dean" of Canterbury (whose latest flight of fancy has been to compare Stalin with Jesus Christ) under the auspices of the Council of American-Soviet Friendship, an organization on the Attorney-General's subversive list.

General Marshall's fumbling efforts to square the circle by bringing the Chinese Communists into a coalition government, accompanied by an embargo on arms for the Nationalists, contributed much to the loss of China as a potential friendly ally. And politically Marshall was associated very closely with the fateful decisions of Teheran and Yalta.

Averell Harriman is one of the men of Yalta. Philip Jessup was prominent in the Institute of Pacific Affairs at the time when the Carter-Lattimore-Field triumvirate was riding high in that organization. Many similar examples could be cited.

American foreign policy is badly in need both of a new look and of a good many new faces among those charged with its execution. Surely the men who committed the blunders which make retreat from victory such an imperative necessity are not the indispensable agents for correcting these blunders. On the contrary, with the best will in the world, they cannot help stumbling over the ghosts of their own past.

So long as Men of Yalta, in the actual or figurative sense of that term, are directing our foreign policy, the American people can possess no firm assurance that a new Yalta may not be in the making. It is the American people, at the polls, who can decree a sweeping change in the top personnel who have led to so many diplomatic defeats.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VIII, No. 37

By Frank C. Hanighen September 12, 1951

MACARTHUR: Did the former Far Eastern Commander, in his Cleveland speech last week mean Taft when he paid a compliment to Ohio's "contribution to American leadership"? Did his words -- "this leadership may increase in the not-too-distant future" -- carry a promise that he would back Taft for President?

Some who have talked privately to the General in recent weeks inform us that the answer to these questions should be "yes". They say that MacArthur emphatically declares he is for Taft and will back him; and that the General conveys the idea that he is morally obligated to support Taft. The latter remark is probably a reference to the fact that Taft jumped to MacArthur's defense when the latter was dismissed. Additionally, it is reported that the General is just as strongly critical of Eisenhower in his private conversations.

Indeed, in the entourage of MacArthur, they tell a story involving Ike which leads one to wonder how deep is President Truman's official affection for the European Commander. This anecdote offers new, hitherto unpublished material about the famous two-hour, two-man secret conference between Truman and MacArthur on Wake Island last fall. It fills in a gap in the version of this conference which the White House leaked out to the press last winter during the controversy over MacArthur. The story, to our knowledge, is familiar to those around MacArthur, and we assume that it is an accurate second-hand version of what MacArthur himself tells. Here is how it goes:

In the famous Quonset hut on Wake, MacArthur finally came to the end of his report on the military situation to the President who sat opposite him. Mr. Truman -- perhaps to relax the atmosphere -- asked the General to join him in a highball, saying he was going to take one himself. Vaughan came in with the drinks. The General thanked him and refused saying, "I never drink while on duty". Then, he began to query the President about American politics. (MacArthur did the same with Roosevelt at his private meeting of the two men in Hawaii in August, 1944; eliciting from the President the remark that Dewey was "just a young fellow who had a lot to learn about politics".)

Truman, in answer to a pointed question from MacArthur as to whether he would run in 1952, did not deny that he would. At this, General MacArthur told him: "Well, here's one general who won't be running against you." This provoked from Truman a rather surprising series of disparaging remarks about General Eisenhower, expressed in that vernacular style now famous as a result of a certain sensational letter to a music critic.

In short, if Truman intends to run next year, and Eisenhower is determined to run, well. . . .

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WILSON VS. JOHNSTON: Mr. Charles E. Wilson, formerly of General Electric Company, has just won a race with Eric Johnston, former head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce -- a race to see which of these prominent exponents of free enterprise could best forward the cause of Fair Dealism, that is, national socialism. Latest news reports indicate that Johnston is "getting out" of the Wage Stabilization Board and returning to "private life" before many months; thus leaving the field to Mr. Wilson, who is head of the war mobilization organization.

We apologize to Mr. Wilson, for last spring we rashly suggested that Johnston had out-distanced him by currying favor with the White House and labor leaders. We might be pardoned for our errors since Johnston has had a much longer and richer expe-

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rience in the good old Washington game. But we did an injustice to Mr. Wilson's staying power and willingness to accept any national socialist precepts which the Fair Deal wanted its bureaucratic chiefs to swallow. Finally, last June, Mr. Wilson gave fulsome approval to all of the new Spence bill (the new Defense Production Act), an improvement (from the Fair Deal point of view) of the old Spence bill of two years ago (which HUMAN EVENTS then accurately described as a measure "In Stalin's Footsteps"). We understand that by this time Mr. Wilson, who last spring groaned under daily personal insults from labor leaders, now is on the friendliest of terms with them.

(At this point, we should make clear our meaning to new subscribers, who have not followed our analyses of the great war economy organization, to which the White House summoned some of the best and most well meaning of business leaders. The primary object of the Administration was, of course, not the task of best putting our economy in gear for war production; it was actually to advance the already developing national socialism. Men like Wilson and Johnston were destined to serve as merely figureheads for the cliques of national socialists in the bureaucracy, who, of course, run the show here.)

To resume. Perhaps we should hedge a bit. For we do not want to do an injustice to Mr. Johnston. He is getting out -- we gather from his statements -- in a "few months". In that length of time, most economic analysts agree, the planned inflation so admirably conceived by the Administration, will be in full swing. Mr. Johnston, as the kept columnists are fond of remarking, is "forward looking". Perhaps, he will be much happier than Mr. Wilson, who remains in the top place. For by that time, the "top place" may well be the "hot seat". Perhaps it is superfluous to remark that the Administration has to have a scapegoat ready.

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TREATIES WITH JAPAN: At San Francisco, Acheson felled Gromyko with a rubber sword -- while the well-trained newspaper claque performed as usual with two-column hosannas. As usual too, some Republicans worked hard to capture a headline in the show -- notably, Mr. John Foster Dulles and Senator William Knowland of California. It remained for an independent Democrat to say the things which should be said, but which in such situations are rarely said.

Gromyko, remarked Senator McCarran, Democrat of Nevada, "appears to have won his greatest victory. . . . Great credit should not be Gromyko's for he only played the hand which was dealt him. But he played it well, and it was a powerful hand." McCarran said that Russia desired two things from the San Francisco conference: (1) a free and sovereign Japan rid of Western control; and (2) an opportunity for propagandizing all Asia against the Western powers, especially the United States. Gromyko seems to have attained both his objectives, McCarran concluded.

In an interview with the UP after the conference, which won space in only one newspaper in this Eastern area, the Nevada Senator warned that the whoop-la may not last long. Before the year is out, McCarran suggested, various factors "which are shaping and will tend to shape her destiny away from alliance with the West, will draw her more and more into the Communist plan, if not actually into the Communist sphere." Among these factors, McCarran laid stress on the economic -- pointing out that Japan's economy traditionally has looked to the Chinese mainland for raw materials. The United States "cannot indefinitely continue as a source of supply . . . our own economy and our defense needs will forbid it". Finally, he warned that "our position in Asia remains precarious in the extreme".

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ELECTION NEXT YEAR: Senator Taft hardly covered himself with glory when he remarked the other day that "any Republican could win in 1952". Indeed, Taft is not the only Republican guilty of over-optimism. Not only GOP politicians but also commentators favorable to the party have been wearing rose-tinted glasses. One of their hopeful theses runs as follows:

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The Southern Democrats are in revolt and will choose their own candidate, Senator Harry Byrd, who will deduct the 128 electoral votes of the South from the Truman Democratic score. The total number of electoral votes is 531 and a candidate must get a majority, or 266, to win. Assuming that the South bolts with its 128, and the GOP candidate gets no fewer than 138, then the head of the Truman Democratic ticket (Truman or his selected successor) will fail of a majority; and thus, in accordance with the Constitution, the election will be thrown into the House of Representatives. Presumably, then, the Southerners would support the GOP candidates. So goes this theory.

But, the hitch lies in the assumption that the GOP will surely obtain at least 138 electoral votes. The unpleasant fact of the matter is that, since 1928, no Republican presidential candidate has, unaided by a split in the Democratic Party, polled more than 115 votes on his own. Here is the record: 1932 -- Hoover, 59; 1936 -- Landon, 8; 1940 -- Willkie, 82; 1944 -- Dewey, 59.

And in 1948? Yes, in that year 189 electoral votes were credited to Dewey. But that number included the votes of New York, Michigan and Maryland. The Wallace defection from the Democrats gave Dewey the votes of these three states. Without the Wallace votes, they would have gone for Truman. Therefore, deducting these votes from Dewey's official total of 189, the fact appears clearly that the Republican candidate in 1948 actually obtained only 115 votes on his own.

In short, there are no election statistics to encourage the view that the GOP, by its own strength and with a candidate and campaign strategy similar to those of the past three elections, stands a good chance of winning the 138 votes necessary to throw the election into the House of Representatives.

The above, however, is not necessarily a counsel of despair. The GOP has not, in the past three elections, run an anti-New Deal, fighting candidate; and it has not attempted an understanding with the Southern Democrats.

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SOUTHERN REVOLT: The rebellion of the Southern wing of the Democratic party is real, is earnest -- such is the view of an increasing number of Capitol observers. This time -- they say -- the uprising is much stronger, better led, more "respectable" in the South than the hastily improvised "Dixiecrat" movement of 1948. Those who watch the development note the following:

(1) It is known that Senator Harry Byrd, the spearhead, will make a speech to a Farm Bureau meeting in Selma, Ala., on November 1. It is already forecasted that the Virginian will out-do his former invectives against the Truman Administration. Although Byrd was invited by only a county chapter of the Alabama Farm Bureau Federation, it is said that the meeting has the warm approval of the state hierarchy of this, the most powerful farmers' organization.

(2) The anti-Truman sentiment among Southern states reaches its high point in Texas. There Governor Shivers has obtained electoral legislation which will enable "cross filing", that is, Republicans and Democrats can have the same slate of candidates for the electoral college. Obviously, this could prove of great assistance to realignment. This measure was passed despite the strong opposition of Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn (Texas' foremost son in the National Administration), Senator Connally and Senator Johnson of Texas. Senator Connally's concern about the political situation in his home state is well known.

(3) Before the next issue of this publication appears, a bipartisan group of conservative public figures may make an announcement of great importance to the developing movement for a realignment of parties.

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PETROLEUM AND VOTES: The ingenuity of the politician on the make is indeed remarkable. Take the case of Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, who is now beating the tom-toms for a special appropriation of $455 millions. This is his estimate of the cost of building a government plant to produce synthetic liquid fuels from coal. We know, of course, that this amount is a modest beginning, that it will be found necessary to increase considerably the appropriation from year to year, if Congress falls for the initial request. That's how bureaus are built.

The "need" for this governmental venture is the "national security". Some day, the argument runs, our supply of oil may drop behind the demand. The oil industry, we learn from the National Petroleum News, admits that such is a possibility, in the distant future, and has spent hundreds of millions in research in the field of synthetic liquid fuels. But, experts in the industry (as well as the Bureau of Mines) assert that the laboratory work still falls far short of originating a formula for commercial production; and the "need" is hardly so pressing as to warrant going ahead with a plant, pell-mell.

Why, then, is Secretary Chapman so bent on his pet scheme? We get an inkling of his motivation from the following facts. At a Jefferson-Jackson Dinner at Columbus, Ohio (Ohio, it must be remembered, is the home state of Republican Taft), Chapman told the assemblage that Ohio has "twelve suitable general areas for synthetic liquid fuels plants", plus an adequate supply of coal. And at Asheville, North Carolina, a Democratic state that is growing markedly anti-Truman in sentiment, he promised the Junior Chamber of Commerce that the development of synthetic fuel oils will "have an immediate, practical effect here in North Carolina".

That is to say, Secretary Chapman's enthusiasm for synthetic liquid fuel is not unrelated to his interest in the 1952 elections.

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FANTASTIC WEAPONS: It is just a little more than six years since the first atom bomb was dropped on Japan. A measure of how much American civilization has moved, and in what direction, may be seen in the President's boast that we have even "more fantastic" weapons of destruction than the atom bomb. Also edifying is the fact that many people interpreted the President's announcement as a tactical maneuver to win Congressional approval for defense appropriations.

Perhaps the best comment on this is a little item run in this column exactly six years ago, on September 12, 1945, as follows:

The Goncourt brothers, famous French men-of-letters, in their Journals, under date of April 7, 1869, made a penetrating and prescient entry concerning atomic energy: "At Magny's dinner. They said that Berthelot had predicted that in a hundred years of physical and chemical science man would learn to know the atom, and that with this knowledge he would be able, at his will, to dim, extinguish or relight the sun like a Carcel lamp. Claude Bernard, for his part, is said to have announced that with a hundred years more of physiological knowledge we would be able to make organic law ourselves -- to manufacture human life, in competition with the Creator.

"For our part we did not raise any objection to all this talk, but we do believe that at this particular stage of scientific development, the good Lord, with a flowing white beard, will arrive on Earth with his chain of keys and will say to humanity, just like they do at the Art Gallery at five o'clock, 'Gentlemen, it's closing time'. ('Messieurs, on ferme.')"

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ERRATUM: In our item "Bootlegging Without Prohibition", Sept. 15, we gave the tax figures on liquor "by the barrel". This should have read, "by the gallon".

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